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ABSTRACT

A study was designed to assess the effect of text format on the decoding and comprehension proficiency of third and fifth grade students. Subjects were 36 students at each grade level who completed a battery of comprehension and decoding measures and then read a set of four stories that had been especially constructed for the study. Each story represented one of four formats: (1) whole sentence, (2) single words, (3) phrasal units, and (4) fragmented groups. Each subject read the first story in the set aloud without answering comprehension questions, then read the remaining three stories silently, answering four questions after each. The findings showed that compared to the other text formats, the phrasal text led to slight improvements in reading comprehension. This format also improved oral reading performance, at least for moderately poor readers. (Materials used in the study are appended.) (FL)

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EFFECTS OF PHRASAL SEGMENTATION ON TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ORAL READING

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ABSTRACT

Decoding and comprehension proficiency of third and fifth graders was assessed. Contrary to studies with older readers, students who were good decoders, but poor comprehenders, were not found. A subset of the students read text presented in four formats: whole sentence, single words, phrasal units, fragmented groups. Format effects on comprehension were found among fifth graders, but not among third graders. In oral reading, the text format had little influence on the students' reading rate, but for some groups of poor readers it had substantial effects on the production of prosodic features such as appropriate intonation and pauses.

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EFFECTS OF PHRASAL SEGMENTATION ON TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ORAL READING

James H. Coots and David P. Snow

In recent years several researchers have explored the idea that skilled reading involves organizing text into units of information that integrate the meanings of "words that go together." This ability, which is viewed as higher level than recognizing individual words or decoding them from print to sound, typically differentiates good comprehenders from poor comprehenders (Golinkoff, 1975-76). Based on this relationship, different approaches to the improvement of text organization have been suggested to assist poor comprehenders become good readers. Among these approaches are the use of imagery training for visually consolidating chunks of text information in memory (e.g., Levin, 1973) and the creation of phrasally segmented texts to physically demarcate multiword idea units for poor comprehenders (e.g., Cromer, 1970). The present study investigates the latter approach.

Cromer (1970) found that some college-level poor readers improved their comprehension performance when they read spatially altered passages in which individual phrases were physically separated from one another. These students had been classified as "difference" poor comprehenders (Wiener and Cromer, 1967) on the basis of vocabulary knowledge found to be equivalent to that of their good comprehender peers. That is, it was presumed that these poor readers had the same basic reading skills as good readers but that they were somehow "different" (i.e., less skilled) in the way they processed text information. Cromer argued that phrasally

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segmented passages allowed difference poor comprehenders to process text in phrasal units, thus simulating the processing organization presumably used by good comprehenders.

Other poor comprehenders were found to have deficits in vocabulary knowledge, which further differentiated them from good comprehenders. These "deficit" poor comprehenders (Wiener & Cromer, 1967) did not show improvement in comprehension performance with phrasally segmented text.

The present study is a partial replication of the Cromer (1970) study. We wanted to determine if the Cromer findings would hold up among third and fifth grade poor comprehenders. That is, are there readers at these grade levels for whom phrasal segmentation enhances the comprehension of text? Also, we wanted to find out if difference poor comprehenders constitute a substantial proportion of children in the third and fifth grades.

Method

Participants

All third grade (n = 188) and fifth grade (n = 211) students in two Southern California public schools participated in the reading skills assessment phase of the study. From this pool, 36 children at each grade level were then selected for the text manipulation (experimental) phase. While both schools were suburban, one was predominantly white and middle class, and the other was mainly composed of minority children (Black, Hispanic, Asian), many of whom came from poor families. Children who were non-English speakers and limited-English speakers were included in the skills assessment phase at the classroom teacher's discretion; however, none participated in the text manipulation phase.

Materials

Assessment. Tests of decoding and comprehension ability were compiled from SWRL reading skills surveys; see Appendix A. At each grade level (third and fifth) the assessment instruments contained 42 individual decoding items and 14 comprehension questions (on 3 or 4 short passages). Readability level and vocabulary were controlled at both grade levels, and the children received directed practice on sample items prior to responding to the assessments.

Text manipulation. At each grade level 16 stories were selected to represent passages that third and fifth graders typically encounter in classroom reading activities. The passages were adapted to fit the length/time constraints of the study (roughly from 75 to 225 words long). Then they were arranged into four sets at each grade level, with nearly average story length and equal narrative/expository balance across sets. For each story, four multiple-choice comprehension questions were created. See Appendix B for these text-manipulation materials.

The stories were typed on 5" x 8 1/2" cards--one sentence per card--and assembled in spiral-bound booklets. Four versions of each story were created by varying the segmentation of sentences into lines of print (see Table 1). The sentence format used a nominal line width of 6" to create arbitrary "segments" of text on each line of print. The word format was the same as the sentence format except that five spaces

Table 1

Examples of Text Formats

SENTENCE Format

1. There are many different kinds of bees.
2. Scientists usually divide them into two main groups: social bees and solitary bees.
3. Social bees live in groups called colonies.
4. Each social bee works with the others to help build a nest for the colony.

WORD Format

1. There are many different kinds of bees.
2. Scientists usually divide them into two main groups: social bees and solitary bees.
3. Social bees live in groups called colonies.
4. Each social bee works with the others to help build a nest for the colony.

PHRASE Format

1. There are many different kinds of bees.
2. Scientists usually divide them
   into two main groups:
   social bees
   and solitary bees.
3. Social bees
   live in groups
   called colonies.
4. Each social bee
   works with the others
   to help build a nest
   for the colony.

FRAGMENT Format

1. There are many different kinds of bees.
2. Scientists usually divide
   them into two main
   groups: social
   bees and solitary bees.
3. Social
   bees live in
   groups called colonies.
4. Each social
   bee works with the
   others to help build a
   nest for the colony.

appeared between successive words. In the phrasal format, lines corresponded to phrasal units, including adverbial and prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses, embedded sentences, and other constructions. Finally, line breaks in the fragmented format occurred one word to the left of phrase boundaries. Print margins were left-justified in all formats.

These formats are similar to the four story conditions used by Cromer (1970). The differences are: a) Cromer's stories were typed on scrolls of paper which the reader rolled by hand to view successive lines or words through a narrow window; b) in the single word condition, Cromer's participants could view only one word at a time; and c) in both the phrasal and fragmented conditions, Cromer presented word groups side-by-side on the same line of print (where possible), separated by a 3-space break.

Procedures

Reading skills assessments were group-administered to all third and fifth grade children by the classroom teachers in two testing sessions. At the beginning of each session the teacher demonstrated, and the students practiced, the item forms that would be encountered that day. Only when children understood the item forms were they allowed to begin the tests.

Students selected to participate in the text manipulation study were observed individually over four experimental sessions of about 20-30 minutes duration. In each session the child read the four stories of a set, all of which were presented in one of the four text formats. The

first story of the session, which the child read aloud, was tape recorded. There were no comprehension questions for the first story. The remaining three stories were read silently, and each was followed by four comprehension questions printed on a separate sheet of paper. The child was required to read each question aloud before answering it. The experimenter helped the child with any question words that he or she had difficulty recognizing. When the four questions had been answered, the child went on to the next story.

Prior to introducing the oral reading story in each session, the experimenter showed the child an example sentence that illustrated the format of the stories for that day. There was no time limit for the reading and question answering tasks. Children were encouraged to read carefully so that they understood what each passage was about.

Design

A 4 x 4 Greco-Latin square was used to create four orthogonal sequences of story set/story format combinations for the reading comprehension phase of the study. Participants at each grade level were assigned to sequences at random, with restrictions.

Results and Discussion

Assessment Phase

At each grade level the decoding and comprehension scores of children from both schools were analyzed by means of the Pearson product-moment formula. Positive correlations of .72 (grade 5) and .77 (grade 3) were obtained. These values indicate a fairly strong overall relationship between decoding and comprehension ability among children at these grade

levels. However, they do not reveal the prevalence of individual patterns of strength and weakness in decoding and comprehension.

The pattern of interest was one that would indicate the existence of "difference" poor comprehenders (Wiener & Cromer, 1967)--children high in decoding ability and low in comprehension. To detect such children we arranged the scores at each grade level in a scatter diagram for visual inspection of the relationship between decoding and comprehension ability. Difference poor comprehenders would necessarily constitute a particular group of outliers; that is, children in one sector of the periphery of the scatter. To define this sector we applied a stringent criterion to the performance data. A child had to score in the bottom quarter of comprehension scores and in the top quarter of decoding scores in order to be indentified as a difference poor comprehender. Of the total 399 children in the study, not one child met this classification criterion.

Failure to find difference poor readers by this stringent criterion does not mean that they may not exist, or that the Wiener and Cromer (1967) classification is not useful. But it does suggest that the difference model fails to account for the comprehension difficulties of most poor readers in the upper elementary grades. From the present data it appears that children develop decoding and comprehension skills in a parallel manner; there is not a great lag between decoding and comprehension growth. If there were a lag supporting the validity of the difference model, it should have shown up as a noticeable bulge in the low comprehension/high decoding quadrant of the present scatter diagrams. But there was no bulge in either plot.

Relaxing the criterion did not improve matters very much. Among third graders only five children (less than 3%) simultaneously scored in the bottom half on comprehension performance and the top half on decoding. Less than 2% of fifth graders (4 children) met this lenient criterion. Because the difference model apparently accounts for so few students, it does not appear to provide a sound theoretical base for generating instruction in reading comprehension.

At this point we abandoned the hypothesis-testing orientation of the Cromer (1970) study and assumed an exploratory approach. The question was now to see if the text formats used by Cromer would have an effect on the reading comprehension performances of third and fifth graders, and if so, to determine the reading skills levels at which those effects were realized. Skills levels were established by dividing the range of obtained decoding scores at each grade into six equal-interval frames. Within each frame the mean comprehension score and the standard deviation values were calculated. This created six "boxes" of scores along the regression line of the scatter diagrams. Students were selected at random from each box, with restrictions, creating a total sample of 36 children per grade level. Five children were sampled from the top and bottom boxes, six from the next two boxes, and seven each from the two center boxes. This pattern loaded the sample in the middle of the skills range, for it was felt that the text manipulations were likely to have the least effect on the best and worst readers.

Text Manipulation Phase

Comprehension performance. During each experimental session a child answered 12 comprehension questions. The number of correct answers in a session reflected performance on one combination of text format and story set. Mean comprehension performance by text format is given in Table 2 for all six skills levels of readers in both grades. Inspection shows that there is not a common pattern of performance for the 12 reading skills groups across the four text formats. It is likely that this variability is partially the result of low numbers of students in the groups (n = from 5 to 7). To reduce this source of instability, students in adjacent skills levels were combined to form three groups for analysis: low (skills levels 1 and 2), medium (3 and 4), and high (5 and 6) ability readers.

Initial analyses indicated no significant effects of sex or of sessions at either grade level. These variables were therefore eliminated from further consideration. A separate analysis of variance was then conducted on the data from each grade using a replicated squares design with a between-squares factor (Myers, 1966). The rows of the square represented sequences, the columns represented text formats, and the cells, story sets. Reading skills level was the between-squares factor. Participants had been assigned at random to rows of the square so that each row contained at least one child from each of the original six levels of skill.

For third graders the analysis revealed a significant effect of story set, F (3,72) = 11.787, p < .001, and a significant story set by

Table 2

Mean Correct Comprehension Scores for Text Formats
by Reading Skills Levels

Grade	Text Format	Reading Skills Level* 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
3	Sentence	5.80**	5.83	7.14	7.57	7.33	9.40	7.17
	Word	6.00	7.33	7.71	7.71	5.83	9.60	7.36
	Phrase	6.40	5.50	7.57	7.57	8.33	8.80	7.36
	Fragment	6.80	7.17	8.00	7.57	7.67	9.40	7.75
	Total	6.25	6.46	7.61	7.61	7.29	9.30	7.41
5	Sentence	3.40	7.00	7.71	8.14	8.00	8.40	7.22
	Word	5.00	7.67	7.29	9.29	8.00	8.40	7.69
	Phrase	3.80	7.33	8.14	8.86	9.17	9.20	7.86
	Fragment	5.20	6.17	8.43	7.14	8.33	9.40	7.47
	Total	4.35	7.04	7.89	8.36	8.38	8.85	7.56

*Level 1 = lowest ability readers

**Maximum score per cell = 12.00

reading skills level interaction, F (6,72) = 2.669, $p < .025$. Reading skills level barely missed reaching significance as a main effect ($p < .06$). Results of the analysis for fifth graders showed a main effect of skills level, F (2,24) = 8.491, $p < .005$, and of story set, F (3,72) = 2.750, $p < .05$. All other main effects and interactions at both grade levels were nonsignificant.

The reading skills level effect and near-effect show that the experimental procedure was sensitive to the range of reading skills as determined by prior screening on decoding and comprehension items. Independent observation by teachers and reading specialists who worked with the children in the study confirmed that our results were consistent with their own evaluations of student reading skills.

The significant effects of story set at both grade levels demonstrate that our attempts to equate materials across sets were not successful. In post hoc examination, the only apparent difference between the highest and lowest story sets was the familiarity of content. Sets did not differ in total length, including both number of words and number of sentences, density of phrasal segments per sentence, or balance between narrative and expository passages, all of which were equated beforehand.

Exact replication of the Cromer (1970) results was not possible in the present study because of changes in the participant selection procedure. Within the present design, however, support for the Cromer findings would have been demonstrated by either a significant main effect of text format or a significant format by reading skills interaction, neither of which

was obtained. Nevertheless, the comprehension data do suggest a relationship between text format and skills level for fifth graders that is similar in part to the relationship documented by Cromer.

Figure 1a shows that for fifth grade readers in the low ability group the word format led to the best comprehension performance. Such poor comprehenders may be assumed to fit the "deficit" model of Wiener and Cromer (1967) inasmuch as they were judged to have serious problems with the decoding of words. Cromer's (1970) deficit poor readers displayed a similar facilitation with texts presented word by word.

Fifth graders in the medium and high skills groups evidenced facilitation with the phrasal format. Although neither group was diagnosed as equivalent to "difference" poor readers--the group in which Cromer (1970) found phrasal facilitation--an argument can be made for functional similarity. Neither the medium and high groups of the present study nor Cromer's difference poor comprehenders were presumed to have severe difficulties with basic reading skills (i.e., decoding, vocabulary). So there is some basis for believing that the comprehension performance of fifth graders in this study is compatible with the Cromer results even though the pertinent data were not statistically significant.

Performance of third graders (Figure 1b), however, cannot be cited in support of Cromer (1970) without invoking questionable attributions to account for striking "anomalies" in the data. For instance, the superiority of texts in the fragmented format for low and medium ranked children defies explanation within present theoretical models of language and reading.

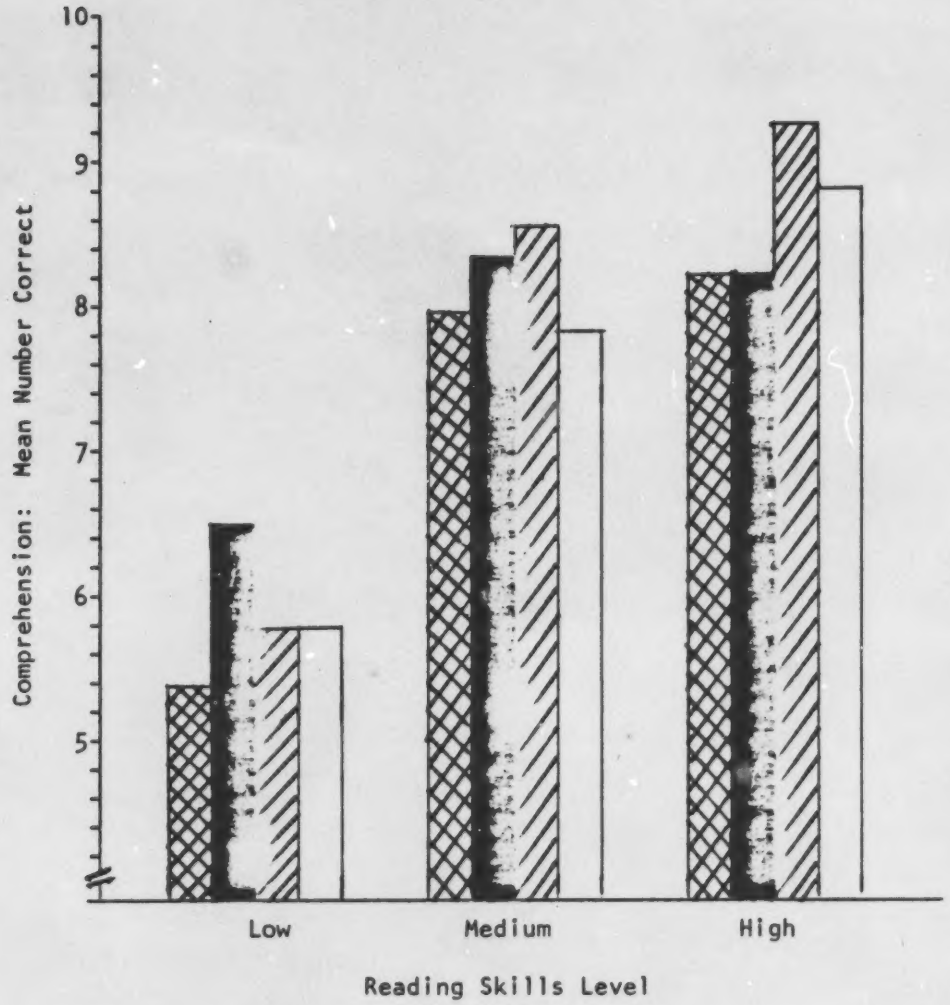
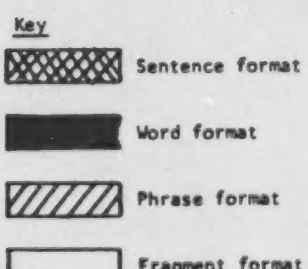


Figure 1a. Mean comprehension scores for fifth grade readers at three skills levels on four text formats.



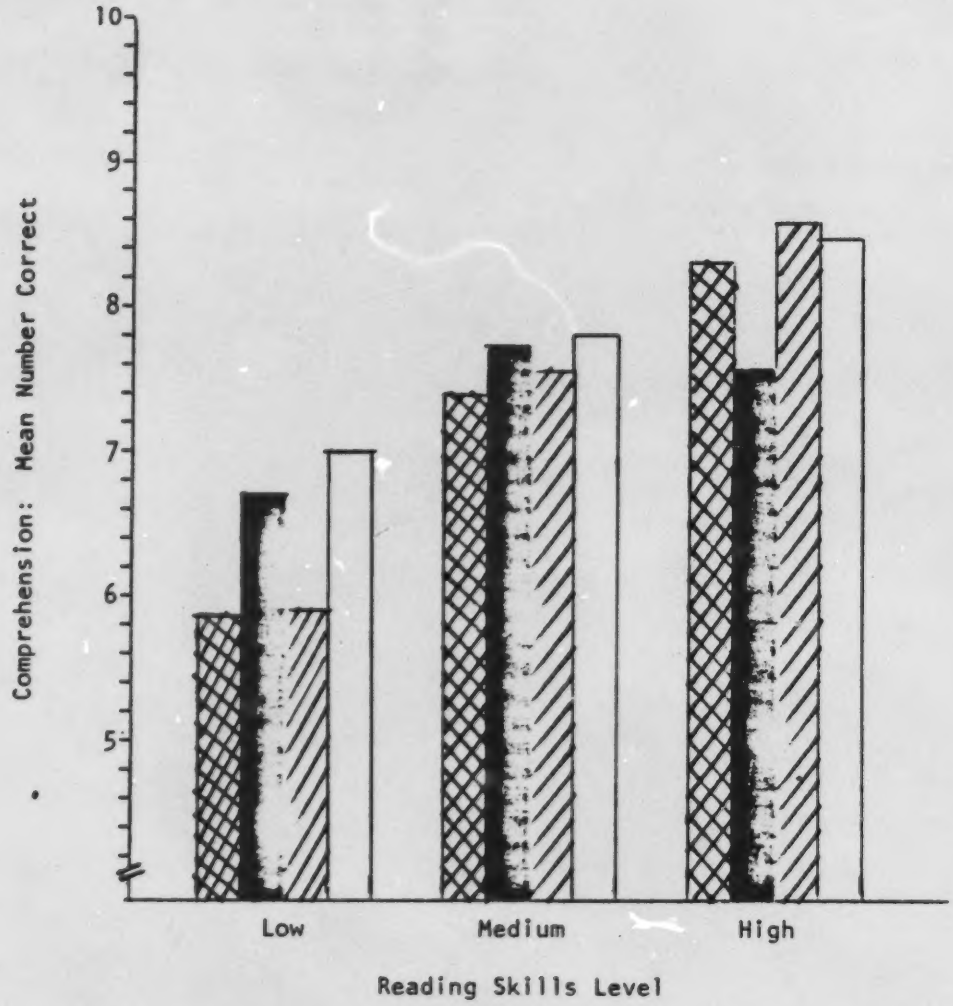


Figure 1b. Mean comprehension scores for third graders

Key

Sentence format

Word format

Phrase format

Fragment format

Oral reading. The first story in each session, which was tape recorded as the child read it aloud, provides additional data on the effects of the four text formats on reading performance. Although not directly related to comprehension, the oral reading data give insight to the manner in which text formats affected reading processes.

Table 3 provides the average reading rates in words per minute for third and fifth graders at each skills level on stories in the four text formats. Except for the apparent effect of reading skills level, the data do not reveal any obvious trends. (The difference between grades is not interpretable, since children at the two grade levels read different stories.) Analysis of variance confirmed this observation. Reading skills level was significant at both grade levels: F (2,24) = 6.36, $p < .01$ at grade 3, and F (2,24) = 12.44, $p < .001$, grade 5. The effect of story set on oral reading rate (not shown in Table 3) was also significant at both grades: F (3,72) = 7.51, $p < .001$, grade 3; F (3,72) = 5.96, $p < .005$, grade 5.

Much of the story set effect can be attributed to differences in vocabulary difficulty across the four oral stories at each grade level. Mean reading rates showed a strong inverse relationship to the proportion of words per story identified as above grade level by the EDL Reading Core Vocabulary List. The exception was third grade low-level readers, where no relationship was evident between reading rate and vocabulary difficulty.

Table 3

Mean Reading Rate in Words Per Minute for Third and Fifth Grade Readers at Low, Medium, and High Skills Levels Across Four Text Formats

Grade	Reading Skills Level	Text Format				Total
		Sentence	Word	Phrase	Fragment	
3	Low	37.40	43.36	38.29	39.31	39.59
	Medium	63.78	59.51	55.93	54.00	58.30
	High	84.29	84.24	84.65	80.39	83.36
	Total	61.35	61.50	57.82	56.92	59.41
5	Low	49.29	53.61	47.50	53.82	51.05
	Medium	96.74	90.84	93.75	99.48	95.20
	High	98.66	98.66	92.56	102.52	98.10
	Total	82.83	81.86	79.25	86.46	82.60

The analysis of the children's oral reading also examined intonation, pitch, and junctural features. The data for this analysis consisted of judgements elicited from two adults. The judges were unfamiliar with reading research and naive to the purposes of the study. They each listened to all four recordings for each of the 18 fifth grade participants--72 recordings in all. These were presented in roughly chronological order, which preserved the original randomized order of story sets and formats. The recordings identified the child, session number, and story, but not the text format. The judges were given the text and format for each story-format combination. Their task was to determine which format (sentence, phrasal, fragmented, or word) the child was reading for each recording. The purpose of the study was to determine if the story format affected the children's oral reading in ways that could be readily perceived.

The judges were not told what cues to look for in making their judgements. By self-report, they appear to have looked for noticeable breaks in intonation or perceptible junctural features in the reading that occurred sometimes at the ends of lines. As one judge expressed it, she looked for places where the kids "left off."

The analysis of the judgement data focused on the judges' accuracy across the different formats and reading skill levels. The results showed that the judges were not very accurate with either high-level readers or very low-level readers.

For high-level readers, the judgements tended to be predominately for "Sentence" or "Phrasal" formats, regardless of the actual format the children were reading. Since these two formats reflect standard readings

of the text (normal prosody), this finding suggests that skilled readers read the text fluently and with appropriate prosody regardless of the physical organization of lines or spaces.

In contrast, very low-skilled readers (Level 1) tended to read all formats in a word-by-word or halting way. Thus, format judgements tended to favor "fragmented" and "word" categories for these children.

The judges were most accurate for children in the lower middle levels (especially Level 2). This suggested that the oral reading of these children expressed prosodic features that were linked to the physical oraganization of the text. They seemed to use line boundaries, rather than syntactic-semantic units, as cues to organizing the suprasegmental features of oral reading. These findings provide some encouraging, if indirect, evidence in favor of the research hypothesis. They show that some poor readers are sensitive to the physical organization of the text into line units. These readers sometimes have difficulty parsing sentence strings and assigning an appropriate suprasegmental organization to them. Thus, they tend to use inappropriate cues to locate the boundaries of meaningful intrasentence units.

An instructional implication is that segmented text may help children bridge the gap from reading by line or word units to reading text by meaningful phrasal units. Phrasally segmented text might help because the line boundaries coincide with the boundaries of major syntactic units. Using phrasal text, children can experience and practice a standard oral reading that is conducive to good comprehension. Through this experience and a gradual fading of the phrasal cues, chidlren may be able to learn inductive strategies for parsing, organizing, and understanding written material.

In summary, little evidence was found for the good decoder-poor comprehender model. For elementary school children, decoding and comprehension skills seem to develop in a parallel manner. However, it is likely that students can benefit from instruction focusing on reading skills other than word recognition. Phrasally segmented text is a promising technique that may help children to perceive meaningful multiword units in reading. Compared to other text formats, phrasal text led to slight improvements in children's reading comprehension. The phrasal format also improved oral reading performance, at least for moderately poor readers. These results suggest that segmented text may be helpful for poor readers in the context of long term instructional programs.

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APPENDIX A

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS*

The reading assessment instruments included two surveys for each of two grade levels (three and five). The Reading Skills Surveys were designed to provide screening-level assessment of children's decoding skills (18 items) and reading comprehension abilities (14 comprehension questions on 3 or 4 short passages). This untimed screening test was followed up by 24-item Decoding Skills Surveys, which assessed decoding skills more fully, and which included a timing measure. An emphasis on decoding skills in these assessments reflects our special concern for reliability in measuring children's knowledge and facility with word recognition skills.

The surveys were constructed by sampling items from three SWRL assessment resources: 1) Proficiency Verifications Systems (PVS)--Reading Proficiency Skills Inventories, 2) SWRL/Ginn Communications Skills Programs Reading Placement Aid (RPA), and 3) Basic Skills Learning Centers (BSLC) Pupil Attainment Test, Decoding Skills I and II.

The above sources were all carefully designed to measure children's academic achievement in reading skill areas that are typically the focus of instruction in the elementary grades. Their content reflects careful constraints for controlling readability level, vocabulary, and appropriateness to children's typical classroom experience. In this way, the test items avoid some of the problems associated with standardized testing, which tends to differentiate children according to their

*Prepared by David Snow.

sociocultural experience rather than measure their learning progress in the classroom.

In addition to controls on vocabulary and test content, the survey items also reflect a diverse sampling among different types of skill areas and response modes. The decoding skills items, for example, focus on simple consonants, consonant clusters, and simple vowels, as well as diphthongs and vowel digraphs. However, the sampling of items was not symmetrical for all of these skill areas. Since decoding skills for vowel sounds are especially crucial in children's acquisition of reading fluency, the item selection emphasizes these skills. As for comprehension tasks, questions were sampled so as to provide a rough balance between literal or paraphrased comprehension tasks on the one hand and inferential comprehension questions on the other, with a slight emphasis on tasks requiring an inferential connection between the question and the text.

On the following pages are tables describing the test items and copies of the assessment instruments.

Table 1. Description of Decoding Items

Reading Test	Item Nos.	No. Items	Skill Area	Task Type	Source
Skills Survey Level 3	1-4	4	consonants	matching	PVS 3A
	5-8	4	vowels	matching	PVS 3A
	9-18	10	mixed	cloze	BSLC DS I
Decoding Survey Level 3	1-6	6	consonants	picture cue	PVS 2A (2) PVS 3 BEGIN (2)
	7-9	3	consonants	cloze	PVS 2A
	10-12	3	consonants	picture cue	PVS 2A
	13-16	4	vowels	matching	PVS 3 BEGIN
	17-24	8	vowels	matching	PVS 3 BEGIN (3) PVS 3 MID (5)
Skills Survey Level 5	1-4	4	vowels	matching	PVS 5A (3) PVS 3 BEGIN (1)
	5-8	4	consonants	matching	PVS 5A
	9-18	10	mixed	cloze	BSLC DS II
Decoding Survey Level 5	1-6	6	vowels	matching	PVS 3A
	7-15	9	consonants	matching	PVS 4A
	16-24	9	vowels	matching	PVS 4B

Table 2. Description of Comprehension Items

Level	Item Nos.	Passage	# words	Source	No. of comprehension questions: Literal/ Paraphrased	No. of comprehension questions: Inferential
3	19-21	Tammy	68	RPA (p.5)	1	2
	22-24	Letter	74	RPA (p.6)	2	1
	25-29	Balloon Trip	149	PVS 3A	3	2
	30-32	Michael & Bruce	77	PVS 3B		3
	Total				6	8
5	19-21	River Voyage	140	RPA (p.8)	1	2
	22-27	Surprise Party	560	PVS 5A	3	3
	28-32	Birds	280	PVS 5A	2	3
	Total				6	8

SWRL READING SKILLS SURVEY
Short Form
Level 3

25

Name _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Mark an X in the circle next to the right answer.

1. The letter g sounds the same in the words page and _____.

- ○ begin
- ○ message
- ○ signal
- ○ wagon

2. The letter s sounds the same in the words visit and _____.

- ○ reason
- ○ master
- ○ dusty

3. In which word is the t silent?

- ○ rustle
- ○ beetle
- ○ gentle

4. The letter s sounds the same in measure and _____.

- ○ history
- ○ tissue
- ○ leisure

Read the word in the box. Then mark the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.

5. wall

- ○ stamp
- ○ stand
- ○ stall
- ○ skate

6. ground

- ○ hold
- ○ brown
- ○ crow
- ○ dough

7. noise

- ○ dome
- ○ joy
- ○ cost
- ○ north

8. blow

- ○ coat
- ○ group
- ○ noon
- ○ sound

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Directions: Mark the circle under the word that best fits in the sentence.

9. She is tall and _____.	chin ○	shin ○	twin ○	slim ○
10. The wire gave me a _____.	shack ○	shock ○	skunk ○	stuck ○
11. The baby is wearing a _____.	bib ○	hut ○	cop ○	bob ○
12. Put some butter on the _____.	bin ○	den ○	bun ○	toss ○
13. Don't make a _____ when you paint.	sum ○	mess ○	mass ○	moss ○
14. I'll sleep on the _____.	bud ○	kit ○	bid ○	cot ○
15. Someone _____ my hat.	grape ○	stale ○	hind ○	stole ○
16. Her money is in her _____.	ports ○	porch ○	pears ○	purse ○

SWRL Reading Skills Survey

Level 3

SAMPLE ITEMS

1. Mark an X in the circle next to the right answer.

The letter c sounds the same in the words cent and _____.

- ○ call
- ○ city
- ○ cake
- ○ cook

2. Read the word in the box. Then mark the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.

light

- ○ ring
- ○ dish
- ○ hit
- ○ bike

Directions: Mark the circle under the word that best fits in the sentence.

17. Please don't push or _____.				
	shore	shove	starve	shave
	○	○	○	○
18. Just take a _____ at this book.				
	peace	glance	leak	chose
	○	○	○	○

Directions: **Read the story. Then answer the questions about the story. Mark the circle next to the best answer.**

Tammy woke up and looked around. Someone was downstairs, but she didn't know who. All she could hear were whispers. Tammy was scared as she slowly got out of bed. The stairs squeaked a little as she slowly went down them. Suddenly the whispers stopped. Tammy stood very still.

Then, Tammy's older brother Benjamin came around the corner. "Why, Tammy," he said, "did the TV wake you up?"

19. Why was Tammy scared?

- ○ She heard whispers.
- ○ It was very quiet.
- ○ Benjamin came around the corner.
- ○ She heard dogs barking.

20. Who is Benjamin?

- ○ a stranger
- ○ Tammy's dog
- ○ Tammy's brother
- ○ a voice on TV

21. What did Tammy hear?

- ○ a bed squeaking
- ○ barking
- ○ voices on TV
- ○ strangers

Directions: **Read the letter. Then answer the questions about the letter. Mark the circle next to the best answer.**

Dear Ms. Wallfrom:

My name is Pat Green. I saw a sign in the window of your grocery store. It said that you need a person to deliver groceries. I would like the job. I could do the job well. I am strong and honest and would enjoy the work. I am free to work every day after school. I will be there Friday afternoon to discuss it with you.

Thank you,

Pat Green

22. What did the sign say?

- ○ A delivery person is needed.
- ○ Pat wants a job.
- ○ Work for free.
- ○ Open on Friday.

23. Where is the job?

- ○ in a school
- ○ in a grocery store
- ○ in a department store
- ○ in a shoe store

24. When can Pat work?

- ○ all day
- ○ in the morning
- ○ only on Friday
- ○ after school

Read the story and answer the questions.

It was the year 1785 in England. John Jeffries and Francois Blanchard were getting into the basket of a huge balloon.

At one o'clock the balloon left England and floated toward the French coast. Jeffries made notes on how the winds changed. Both men wanted to be the first to cross over from England to France in a balloon.

After an hour and a half in the air, the balloon started to come down. The men thought that they would sink in the water. They threw everything they could out of the balloon, but that did not help. At last they took off their winter clothes and threw them out. The balloon started to rise again, and the men were safe. After two hours in the air, the men landed on the French coast, in their underwear. This was the first trip from England to France in a balloon.

25. What is the best title for this story?

- ○ Flying Over Water
- ○ A Safe Trip To England
- ○ To France in a Balloon
- ○ The Changing Winds

26. How long did the trip take?

- ○ five hours
- ○ one hour
- ○ two hours
- ○ from 1785 to 1786

27. True or false?

There had been many balloon trips from England to France before 1785.

- ○ true
- ○ false

28. Why did Jeffries take notes?

- ○ He wanted to know about the French coast.
- ○ He wanted to keep notes about the winds.
- ○ He wanted to know how deep the water was.
- ○ He wanted to write a story about seabirds.

29. Why did the men throw everything into the water?

- ○ The balloon was sinking.
- ○ The balloon was too small.
- ○ They didn't need their things anymore.
- ○ They were an hour and a half late.

Read the story and answer the questions.

Michael got a fancy model car from his uncle. He tried to put it together, but he didn't understand the directions. Then Michael's friend, Bruce, came over. Bruce liked to build models. He knew everything about fitting the pieces together.

Michael asked Bruce to help him. Both boys started to work, but soon Bruce seemed to be doing everything. Michael wanted to work on his own model. "How can I get Bruce to let me work on my model?" he thought.

30. What was Michael's problem before Bruce came over?

- ○ He couldn't find the glue.
- ○ He couldn't follow the directions.
- ○ He couldn't find his directions.
- ○ He lost some pieces of the model.

31. What was Michael's problem after Bruce came over?

- ○ Bruce didn't let him work at all.
- ○ Michael didn't like to work.
- ○ Bruce took the paints and glue.
- ○ Bruce didn't know what to do.

32. What did Bruce know before he started helping Michael?

- ○ He knew how to build models.
- ○ He knew how to drive a car.
- ○ He knew how to sell models.
- ○ He didn't know anything.

SWRL READING SKILLS SURVEY
Short Form
Level 5

Name _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Read the word on the left. Mark an X in the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.

1.	how	○ doubt ○ bought ○ rough ○ through
2.	cry	○ rhythm ○ myth ○ nylon ○ month
3.	pause	○ dark ○ down ○ dawn ○ lake
4.	such	○ blow ○ lawn ○ few ○ month

The underlined letter or letters stand for a sound. Mark the circle next to the word with the same sound.

5.	rejoin	○ anger ○ bargain ○ dagger ○ badge
6.	dozen	○ reason ○ creation ○ lesson ○ imagine
7.	orchestra	○ future ○ chemist ○ channel ○ pitcher
8.	sky	○ scissors ○ science ○ scale ○ scent

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Directions: Mark the circle under the word that best fits in the sentence.

9. Jane is _____ today.

absent	hobby	poppy	twinkle
○	○	○	○

10. Hit the ball with your _____.

puddle	racket	peddle	riddle
○	○	○	○

11. She _____ me with a feather.

tackled	tangled	tickled	tickets
○	○	○	○

12. I know that he will _____ me.

locket	defend	pretend	cute
○	○	○	○

13. Hand me that _____ of bread.

leaf	pause	praise	loaf
○	○	○	○

14. Ann is wearing a blue _____.

groan	blouse	pain	scout
○	○	○	○

15. I like the _____ of the milk.

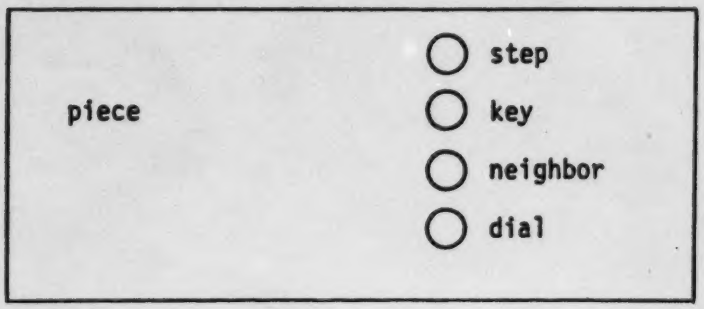
fever	toast	flavor	further
○	○	○	○

SWRL Reading Skills Survey

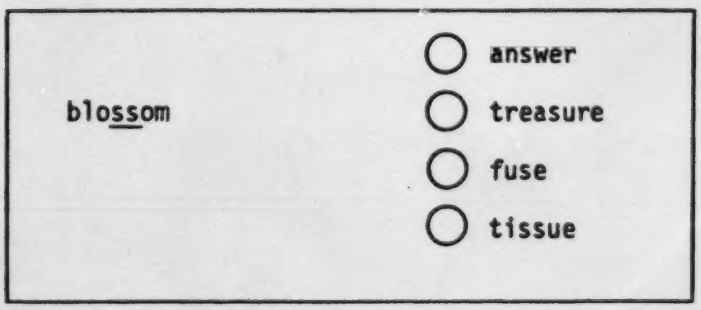
Level 5

SAMPLE ITEMS

1. Read the word on the left. Mark an X in the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.



2. The underlined letter or letters stand for a sound. Mark the circle next to the word with the same sound.



Directions: Mark the circle under the word that best fits in the sentence.

16. A _____ fell to the floor.	knit ○	crumb ○	postage ○	certain ○
17. Don't be _____ with fire.	kindness ○	handful ○	careless ○	goodness ○
18. I got an _____ to a party.	action ○	invention ○	attention ○	invitation ○

Directions: **Read the story. Then answer the questions about the story. Mark the circle next to the best answer.**

Every Friday morning a small riverboat leaves the sleepy jungle town of Tailor's Landing. It starts its day long voyage up one of the world's most dangerous rivers, the Yellowjacket. Last week Curly Johnson took me along for a trip up the river. We pushed off from the dock just as the sun was lighting the sky. Thick jungle crowded the banks of the river. Crocodiles floated noiselessly in the river. We heard the screeching of a thousand jungle birds. They drowned out the small noise of our passing boat.

We reached the town of Queensland just as the sun was setting. In the morning, we would start back for Tailor's Landing. For me, it was an adventure I would never forget. But for Curly, the riverboat captain, it was not an adventure. He said it was just another job.

19. How long does the trip up the river take?

- ○ one day
- ○ two days
- ○ one week
- ○ two weeks

20. Why didn't Curly think the trip was an adventure?

- ○ It was too noisy.
- ○ It was too slow.
- ○ It was too easy.
- ○ It was his job.

21. What is the best name for this story?

- ○ All About My Friend Curly
- ○ Dangerous Jungle Crocodiles
- ○ My Riverboat Ride
- ○ Landing in the River

Read the story, and answer the questions that follow it.

Claire rode her bicycle up to the Benson's house, the first stop on her paper route.

"Hi," she said to Joan, who was sitting on the front step. Claire reached into the large basket strapped to the handlebars. She pulled out a newspaper and tossed it neatly onto the doormat.

"Wow," said Joan. "You do that pretty well."

Claire laughed. "Thanks. I've had a lot of practice this summer."

"Come back for some lemonade when you're finished." said Joan.

"Okay, I'll see you later." Claire thought about her job as she delivered the papers. She really like it. It was nice to be able to read the comic section before anyone else did. And she liked folding each paper into thirds and slipping a thick rubber band around it. But what Claire enjoyed most was throwing the paper as close as she could to each porch or doorstep.

A lot of people were on Claire's route, but some of them were special. For instance, every day she saw Mrs. Gruber pulling weeds in her flower beds. In the next block the Ramirez twins would be playing catch in their front yard. At the end of the route Claire always looked for Mr. Wilson's cat, Merlin, who would be lying in the sun on the front walk. Mr. Wilson was usually napping in a chair on the porch. He would wave as Claire threw the paper over the railing.

Today, when Claire delivered Mrs. Gruber's paper, she didn't see Mrs. Gruber weeding in her garden. "She must have gone shopping," Claire decided.

The Ramirez twins were not in their yard when Claire pedaled by their house. "They're probably at the ball game in the park," she thought to herself.

When Claire arrived at Mr. Wilson's house, she didn't see Merlin. Then she noticed that Mr. Wilson wasn't sitting on the porch. Claire was puzzled. Something was wrong.

"Where could everybody be?" Claire wondered. She rode back to the Benson's house the same way she had come, but she didn't see anyone. She was glad to find Joan waiting for her.

"You seem to be the only one around," Claire said, parking her bike.

"Oh, really?" Joan said as she led the way to the kitchen. She poured the lemonade, and suggested that they go into the backyard.

A loud cheer went up as Claire stepped outside. There were Mrs. Gruber, the Ramirez twins, Mr. Wilson, Merlin, and Joan's mother.

"What's going on?" Claire asked.

Joan's mother came up and said, "We're having a party for you. We wanted to thank you for being our paper girl this summer."

"That's right," the twins said. "You're the best. You never miss our front step."

"And you never throw the paper in my rose bushes," added Mrs. Gruber.

"Nothing could be better than to have the paper delivered right to my feet," Mr. Wilson boasted.

"Then this party should be for you too," said Claire, holding up her glass, "because you're the best people--and cat--I've ever delivered papers to."

22. Who got the first paper on Claire's route?

- ○ the Bensons
- ○ Mrs. Gruber
- ○ the Ramirez family
- ○ Mr. Wilson

23. How did Claire feel about having a paper route?

- ○ She thought it was too much work.
- ○ She liked it very much.
- ○ She would rather weed her garden.
- ○ She didn't like delivering papers in the afternoon.

24. What did Claire like the most about delivering the papers?

- ○ reading the comic section
- ○ folding the papers
- ○ putting on the rubber bands
- ○ throwing each paper

25. When did Claire finally become puzzled and wonder where everyone was?

- ○ at the beginning of her route
- ○ when Mrs. Gruber wasn't weeding
- ○ when the twins weren't in their yard
- ○ when she didn't see Merlin and Mr. Wilson

Please turn the page

26. Where did Claire find everyone?

- ○ in Mrs. Gruber's garden
- ○ in Joan's backyard
- ○ on Mr. Wilson's porch
- ○ in the park

27. Why didn't Claire know about the party?

- ○ Joan forgot to tell her about it.
- ○ No one wanted her to come.
- ○ It was a surprise party.
- ○ Her invitation got lost in the mail.

Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

The city, with its tall skyscrapers and glass buildings, can be a deadly trap for birds. On foggy days flocks of birds have flown into buildings and died. Bright, sunny weather is also dangerous because the sky and clouds are reflected in apartment windows. The birds are fooled by the reflection and slam into the glass.

However, there are some kinds of birds that have learned to live in the city. These birds have found places to nest that are as safe as their homes in the wild. And they have found plenty of food to feed their young.

Peregrine falcons live on the edges of cliffs in the wilderness. Some falcons now make their homes on Wall Street in New York City. They build nests on the tops of the tall buildings. From their nests the falcons swoop and dive at tremendous speeds. They feed on the pigeons that live in the city's parks.

The chimney swifts once nested in hollow trees. Now, in summer, some swifts have found safe homes in the sooty chimneys of city dwellings. At dawn the swifts emerge from the chimneys in search of insects to feed their hungry families. By the time the furnace fires are lit in the fall, the young swifts are grown up and fly away with the others.

Nighthawks also have taken easily to city living. Nighthawks used to lay their eggs on the ground, but now they lay their eggs on the flat roofs of apartment buildings. These roofs are made of tar paper and covered with a layer of gravel. The gravel hides the spotted, pebblelike eggs from view. The nighthawks have very few city enemies, and find many of their favorite insects swarming around the streetlights after sunset.

28. Which sentence best states the main idea of the article?

- ○ The city is too dangerous for birds to live there.
- ○ Chimney swifts are safer than other birds that live in the city.
- ○ There are dangers for birds in the city, but some birds have learned to live there.
- ○ Peregrine falcons are happier living on Wall Street than they were when they lived in the wilderness.

29. Why is the city often dangerous for birds?

- ○ They can get burned by furnaces that are lit in the autumn.
- ○ They can't find enough food to eat in the city.
- ○ They can fly into buildings and hurt themselves.
- ○ They can't find good places to build nests and lay their eggs.

30. What do the peregrine falcons eat?

- ○ chimney swifts
- ○ pigeons
- ○ nighthawks
- ○ insects

31. When do the chimney swifts hunt for insects?

- ○ at dawn
- ○ after sunset
- ○ in the autumn
- ○ when the streetlights go on

32. Where do the nighthawks make their homes in the city?

- ○ in hollow trees
- ○ on the ground
- ○ in sooty chimneys
- ○ on flat roofs

Name_____

School_____

Teacher_____

Date_____

DECODING SKILLS SURVEY -- LEVEL 3

Fill in the circle by the picture that fits.

1. Which name ends like sad?

○

○

2. Which name begins like king?

○

○

3. Which name begins like jump?

○

○

4. Which name ends like pail?

○

○

5. Which name begins like foot?

○

○

6. Which name ends like drop?

○

○

Mark the circle by the word that best fits in the sentence.

7. You eat with a _____.

fort ○
fork ○
form ○

8. Billy made a _____ in the rope.

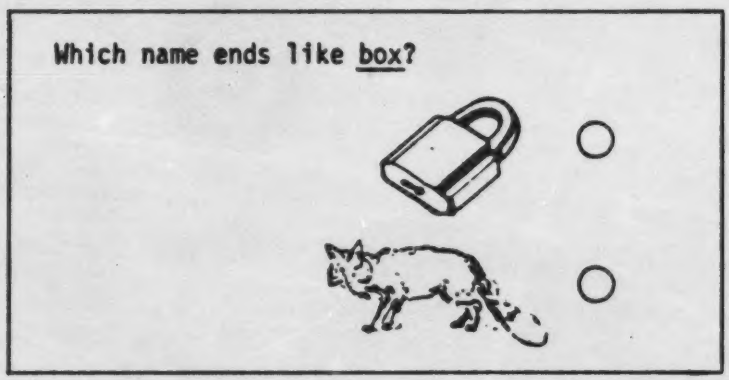
key ○
knot ○
note ○

SWRL Decoding Skills Survey

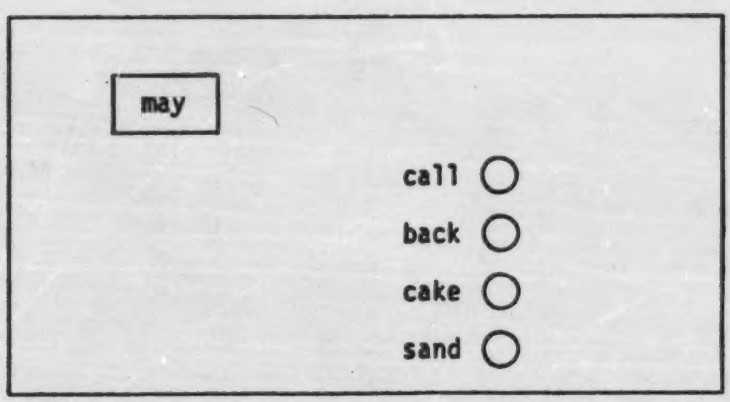
Level 3

SAMPLE ITEMS

1. **Mark an X in the circle by the picture that fits.**



2. **Read the word in the box. Mark the circle by the word with the same vowel sound.**



9. Ann said to Mike, "What time is it? Look at your _____."

- walk ○
- watch ○
- wash ○

Fill in the circle by the answer.

10. This name begins with the letters _____.

- sh ○
- ch ○
- th ○
- wh ○

11. What is this?

- a shirt ○
- a skirt ○

12. Which name begins with the letters sw-?

○

○

Read the word in the box. Listen to the sound in the middle. Choose the word with the same sound.

13. luck

- use ○
- much ○
- soup ○

14. sad

- back ○
- face ○
- save ○

15. bit

- hide ○
- dish ○
- life ○

16. neck

- sweet ○
- reach ○
- send ○

Which pair of words has the same vowel sound as the word in the box?

17. nice

- hid, trick ○
- pink, ring ○
- night, sky ○

18. nose

- cold, boat ○
- room, blue ○
- shot, block ○

19. bake

- grass, last ○
- land, track ○
- tail, say ○

Read the word in the box. Mark the circle by the word with the same vowel sound.

20. lawn

- shade ○
- pause ○
- mail ○
- house ○

21. grain

- path ○
- law ○
- cast ○
- flame ○

22. crown

- coach ○
- bone ○
- loud ○
- soon ○

23. thief

- since ○
- meet ○
- shine ○
- sigh ○

24. dream

- heard ○
- steam ○
- learn ○
- bread ○

Name _____

School _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

DECODING SKILLS SURVEY -- LEVEL 5

Read the word in the box. Then mark the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.

1. shirt
   - ○ bright
   - ○ fine
   - ○ ship
   - ○ clerk

2. ground
   - ○ hold
   - ○ brown
   - ○ crow
   - ○ dough

3. mean
   - ○ dead
   - ○ few
   - ○ cream
   - ○ thread

4. noise
   - ○ dome
   - ○ joy
   - ○ cost
   - ○ north

5. turn
   - ○ grunt
   - ○ purse
   - ○ ugly
   - ○ rule

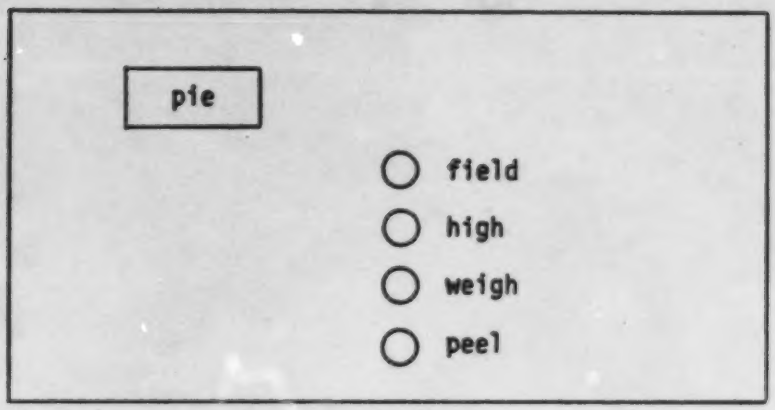
6. blow
   - ○ coat
   - ○ group
   - ○ noon
   - ○ sound

SWRL Decoding Skills Survey

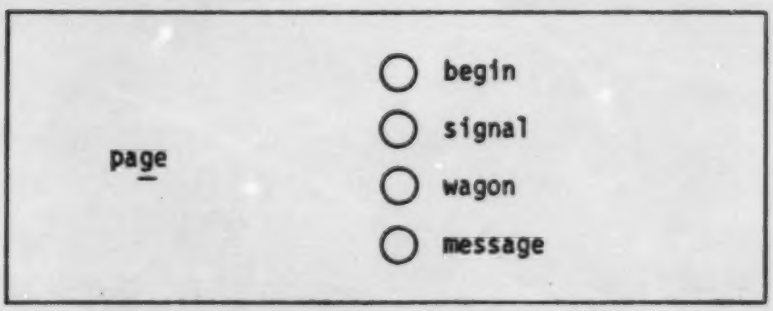
Level 5

SAMPLE ITEMS

1. **Read the word in the box. Then mark the circle next to the word with the same vowel sound.**



2. **Read the word that is by itself. Look at the underlined letter. The underlined letter stands for a sound. Read the four words and decide which word has the same sound that you hear in the word by itself.**



In each box, read the word by itself and look at the underlined letter or letters. The underlined letters stand for a sound. Read the four words and decide which word has the same sound that you hear in the word by itself.

7.	cement =	○ cotton ○ cider ○ card ○ candle
8.	kennel	○ certain ○ century ○ cable ○ celery
9.	game	○ goose ○ gem ○ gym ○ general
10.	join	○ gentle ○ gale ○ gift ○ goose
11.	special	○ ocean ○ circus ○ actor ○ unlock
12.	machine	○ architect ○ orchid ○ parachute ○ mechanic
13.	chorus	○ chef ○ chrome ○ chute ○ mustache
14.	waffle	○ grasp ○ judge ○ wrapper ○ enough
15.	scent	○ rose ○ curl ○ sand ○ chop

Read the word that is by itself. Mark the circle next to the word that has the same <u>vowel</u> sound.

16.	hush	○ glow ○ sum ○ dues ○ flute
17.	brain	○ grasp ○ bark ○ tray ○ heat
18.	step	○ feather ○ ceiling ○ screen ○ treat
19.	fly	○ piece ○ girl ○ cliff ○ might
20.	draw	○ bought ○ clue ○ rough ○ throw
21.	blew	○ loud ○ deep ○ steak ○ glue
22.	clay	○ eight ○ light ○ season ○ farm
23.	hurt	○ true ○ market ○ ruffle ○ bird
24.	piece	○ key ○ feather ○ neighbor ○ dial

APPENDIX B

TEXT-MANIPULATION MATERIALS*

On the following pages are the materials used for the text-manipulation part of the study. The materials include reading passages and comprehension questions. The reading passages were printed in the four formats described in the text.

All of the experimental passages were adapted from SWRL Proficiency Verification Systems materials. Thus, the text characteristics reflect the careful constraints established by PVS for controlling readability level, vocabulary, and appropriateness to children's typical classroom experience. The PVS source reference for each passage is given in Table 1, along with information on word-length and discourse type.

*Prepared by David Snow.

Table 1. Summary of Reading Passages

Grade	Set	Story	Title	From PVS	Type	Length
3	1	A	Carl's Sailboat	3C	narrative	113
	1	B	Kite Flying	2B	narrative	91
	1	C	Rabbits and Raccoons	3D	expository	127
	1	D	Sea Horses	3C	expository	123
3	2	A	Puerto Rico	3A	expository	126
	2	B	Deer	3B	expository	108
	2	C	The Bear and the Fox	2D	narrative	160
	2	D	Useful Plants	3A	expository	84
3	3	A	Birds and Fish	3B	expository	106
	3	B	Inner Clocks	2A	expository	143
	3	C	Building a Roof	3MID	narrative	120
	3	D	Two Fish	3A	expository	76
3	4	A	Birds and Insects	2D	expository	61
	4	B	Bears	2A	expository	115
	4	C	Shoe Care	3A	expository	73
	4	D	Rained Out	3D	narrative	137
5	1	A	Ice Skating	4D	narrative	83
	1	B	Morning Plans	4A	narrative	142
	1	C	Postage Stamps	5MID	expository	113
	1	D	Bees	5A	expository	191
5	2	A	Homing Pigeons	5B	expository	124
	2	B	Winter Customs	4C	expository	115
	2	C	Landing on the Moon	5BEGIN	narrative	108
	2	D	Mathew Brady	5A	expository	220

Grade	Set	Story	Title	From PVS	Type	Length
5	3	A	Evening at Home	4A	narrative	72
	3	B	Almanacs	4A	expository	71
	3	C	Olivia, Pilot	5MID	narrative	146
	3	D	Masks	5B	expository	181
5	4	A	Inventors	4A	expository	122
	4	B	Quiet Afternoon	4A	narrative	121
	4	C	Lost at Sea	5A	narrative	118
	4	D	Bears	4D	expository	188

Grade 3, Set 1, Story A

Carl's sailboat needed painting. The bottom was chipped, and the paint was peeling off. Carl bought some paint, some sheets of sandpaper, and a new paint brush. Then he went to work. He cleaned and sanded the boat until all of the loose paint was gone. Then he put the first coat of paint on and let it dry in the warm sun.

The next day the boat was dry enough for the second coat. Carl stirred the paint and brushed it on with smooth, even strokes. When he was finished, the boat looked like new. Carl cleaned the brush and threw away the empty paint cans. Next week he would go sailing.

Grade 3, Set 1, Story B

Jan wanted to make a kite. She got silk paper and glue. She got sticks for the frame. She got a ball of string.

Jan made a good kite. The wind was blowing, so Jan tried to fly the kite. She could not get it up into the air.

"What is the matter with my kite?" Jan asked herself. "Oh, I know! I forgot the tail!"

She ran to get some paper. Then she made a long tail for her kite. Soon the kite was flying high over the tree tops.

1. What was Jan's problem? A. She didn't know how to make a tail for her kite. B. She didn't have enough string. C. She forgot to put a tail on her kite.	3. How did Jan solve her problem? A. She made a new kite. B. She got a ball of string. C. She made a tail for her kite.
2. How do you think Jan felt when her kite didn't fly? A. She did not want to fly the kite again. B. She gave up and went home. C. She wanted to know why it didn't fly.	4. What kind of day was it when Jan tried to fly her kite? A. It was windy. B. It was raining. C. There wasn't enough wind.

Grade 3, Set 1, Story C

The cottontail rabbit is a small animal with long ears. It has a white tail that is short and fluffy.

Cottontail rabbits live in holes near bushes or clumps of grass. During the spring and summer months, they nibble on clover and grass. They eat and play most of the night and spend the day sleeping in their holes.

Raccoons are larger than rabbits and weigh anywhere from twelve to twenty-five pounds. They have short ears and a long, bushy tail.

Raccoons don't live in holes like rabbits. Instead, they live in hollow trees, stumps, or caves. Raccoons like hollow trees best because they feel safe when they are high above the ground. They hunt for their food at night and sleep during the day.

1. This animal has a long, bushy tail. A. rabbit B. raccoon C. both	3. This animal eats at night and sleeps during the day. A. raccoon B. rabbit C. both
2. Sometimes raccoons _____. A. live in clumps of grass B. live in hollow trees C. live in clover	4. When do raccoons feel safe? A. when they are in a tree B. when they are hidden in a hole C. at night

Grade 3, Set 1, Story D

The sea horse is a small fish that looks like a question mark. It is called a "sea horse" because its head looks almost like a horse's head. Sea horses live in the tropics where the water is warm. They cannot live in cold water.

The sea horse has an interesting tail. The tail can curl around things just like a monkey's tail. When the sea horse is tired of swimming, it finds a plant, wraps its tail around it, and rests.

Sea horses raise their young differently from many sea animals. The mother lays the eggs, and the father cares for them. He keeps the eggs in his stomach pouch so they will be safe. The eggs stay there until they hatch.

1. Why do sea horses live in the tropics? A. They like tropical plants. B. They cannot live in cold water. C. They are very small.	3. In what way do sea horses raise their young differently than many sea animals? A. The mother has a pouch. B. The father takes care of the eggs. C. The eggs are on the bottom of the ocean.
2. When do sea horses look for a plant? A. when they are cold B. when they lay eggs C. when they are tired	4. The sea horse's tail is interesting because _____. A. it looks like a horse's tail B. it can curl around things C. it looks like a question mark

Grade 3, Set 2, Story A

Puerto Rico is an island in the Caribbean Sea. Susan and Michael went there on their vacation.

El Yunque is a park in Puerto Rico. It is a mountain covered with rain forests. Wild parrots fly there among the trees and beautiful flowers.

El Morro fortress is an old Spanish fort by the bay of San Juan. The fortress was built a long time ago to protect the bay. It is fun to climb around it and look through the narrow slits in the walls.

Luguillo Beach is a favorite beach for swimming and sun bathing. The water is so clean and warm that you can swim a long time. If you like to wear a swim mask, you can see lots of sea life underwater.

Grade 3, Set 2, Story B

White-tail deer live in many forests. Their coats are brown. Their tails are brown on top and white below. When the deer run away, their white tails stick up.

Elk are the second largest deer in the world. They grow as big as 700 pounds. Only moose are larger. Elk eat grass, twigs and small plants. They like to live in the forest.

Moose are also deer. Most of them live in Alaska and Canada. They live in the forests near lakes and swamps. They eat branches and water plants. Moose are big, but they can run fast. Some moose can run as fast as a horse.

1. What is the best title for this story? A. The Elk Forest B. Different Kinds of Deer C. The Moose of the Swamps	3. Where do moose live? A. high in the mountains B. in Alaska and Canada C. in dry, sandy places
2. Elk _____. A. have white tails B. live near swamps C. grow as big as 700 pounds	4. When does the white-tail deer show the white part of its tail? A. when it is tired B. when it eats C. when it runs away

Grade 3, Set 2, Story C

Long ago, the bear had a long tail. One winter day, the bear saw a fox with a big fish in its mouth. "Stop!" shouted the bear. "I want your fish."

The fox said, "This fish is mine. But I can tell you how to catch your own fish. First, go to the lake and make a hole in the ice. Then put your tail through the hole into the water. The fish will come and grab onto your tail."

The bear did what the fox told him. He kept his tail in the cold water for a long time.

Finally, the bear said, "I must have many fish by now." He tried to pull his tail out. It was so ice cold that it broke off when he pulled on it. "Oh, no," moaned the bear. "The fox tricked me. Now I have no fish--and no tail either."

And from that day on, the bear had a stubby tail.

1. Why did the bear stop the fox? A. He wanted the fox's fish. B. He wanted to play. C. He wanted to learn to fish.	3. What happened first? A. the bear lost his tail B. the fox told the bear how to fish C. the bear put his tail into the water
2. Why did the bear stick his tail into the water? A. He wanted to trick the fox. B. He wanted to catch fish. C. He was cold.	4. What happened last? A. the bear lost his tail B. the fox told the bear how to fish C. the bear put his tail into the water

Grade 3, Set 2, Story D

We use plants in different ways. A yam plant has large, thick roots that are used for food. Some yams are used to make medicine.

A banana is a fruit that comes with its own wrapping. It grows in big bunches on top of a banana plant. Bananas are good to eat. They have a sweet taste.

Jute is a plant that has long fibers inside its stem. These fibers can be made into strong thread that is used in making rope and rugs.

1. The root of this plant is useful. A. Yam B. Banana C. Jute	3. Something from this plant is used for making thread. A. Yam B. Banana C. Jute
2. Something from this plant is used for medicine. A. Yam B. Banana C. Jute	4. The fruit of this plant grows in bunches. A. Yam B. Banana C. Jute

Grade 3, Set 3, Story A

Birds and fish are two different kinds of animals, but they have some things in common. Birds fly through the air with their wings. Their wings and bodies are covered with feathers. These feathers make the bird's body smooth so that it can glide easily through the air. The feathers also keep the bird warm. Birds breathe with lungs.

Fish live in the water. Just as a bird flies through the air with its wings, a fish swims through the water with its fins. Fish do not have lungs. Fish breathe with gills. Fish are covered with scales that help them glide easily through the water.

Grade 3, Set 3, Story B

There is a bird in Australia called the reef heron. This bird finds its food on the beach.

The best time for finding food is at low tide. The bird can look for small animals in the sand when the water is low.

The bird can not see the beach from its nest, but still it knows when the water is low.

This bird has an inner clock that tells it when the water is low.

A fiddler crab changes the color of its skin every day. It has an inner clock that tells it when it is time to change color.

Every morning when the sun comes up, the skin of the crab is silver gray. At noon it is dark gray. At night the skin is silver gray again.

The crab can hide safely on the beach because it can change the color of its skin.

1. What do these stories tell you? A. how animals can tell time B. how birds eat crabs on the beach C. how animals live at low tide	3. What does the reef heron do when the water is low? A. hides on the beach B. looks for food C. goes back to its nest
2. Can the reef heron see the beach from the nest? A. yes B. no	4. Why is it good that the crab can change the color of its skin? A. It can swim better. B. It can sleep better. C. It can hide better.

Grade 3, Set 3, Story C

Two men were on the roof of a house that was being built. They had carried rolls of tar paper and loads of shingles up to the roof. The men rolled the tar paper out and nailed it on the roof. Each row of tar paper overlapped with the next row. The shingles were narrow, flat pieces of wood, stacked in big piles on the roof. After the tar paper was in place, the men took the shingles one at a time and nailed them in neat rows over the tar paper. The rows of shingles overlapped. This made the roof strong. The wind could not blow the shingles off and no rain or snow could get through it.

1. What did the two men do first? A. They carried shingles and tar paper onto the roof. B. They rolled out the tar paper. C. They nailed down the shingles.	3. How did the men get the tar paper to hold? A. They used glue. B. They nailed it down. C. They made the rows overlap.
2. What did they do next? A. They carried the shingles and tar paper onto the roof. B. They rolled out the tar paper. C. They nailed down the shingles.	4. Why must the roof be strong? A. People want to walk there. B. The roof has to stand wind and rain. C. The roof looks better.

Grade 3, Set 3, Story D

The ribbon fish is a long fish that looks like a flat ribbon. It is about twenty-five feet long. It lives in the deep ocean. A long time ago, sailors used to think that it was a huge sea serpent.

The halibut is another fish. It lives in the deep parts of the ocean. It can weigh five hundred pounds and be seven feet long. It has both eyes on the same side of its head.

1. Which is shorter? A. halibut B. ribbon fish C. sea serpent	3. Which fish live deep in the ocean? A. halibut B. ribbon fish C. both fish
2. What did some sailors think about the ribbon fish? A. Its eyes were close together. B. It was a sea serpent. C. It had seven feet.	4. How does the ribbon fish get its name? A. It looks like a sea serpent. B. It has bright colors. C. It is long and flat.

Grade 3, Set 4, Story A

Birds can see and hear better than most other animals. Good eyes and ears help when the birds look for food.

Many birds eat insects. Some birds fly after flies and bees and catch them in the air. Other birds dig tiny insects out of the bark of trees. Some of these birds use a thorn to dig the insects out.

Grade 3, Set 4, Story B

Big brown bears live in forests. They can run fast. They can climb trees. They like to look for food around camps and picnic tables.

Polar bears live in the cold north. They are white like snow. They can swim very well. Sometimes they ride on floating ice. Polar bears have pads of fur under their feet. These keep their feet warm when they walk on ice and snow. Pads also keep the bears from sliding on the ice.

Sun bears are very small. They have black fur and yellow marks on their chest. The marks look like the sun. Sun bears hunt at night. They make nests in trees and sleep in the daytime.

1. What is the best title for this story? A. Small Bears of the World B. Bears that Climb Trees C. Different Kinds of Bears	3. Polar bears _____. A. live in large forests B. hunt at night C. have pads of fur under their feet
2. Where do big brown bears live? A. in forests B. in camps C. on floating ice	4. Sun bears _____. A. are white like snow B. hunt at night C. are very big

Grade 3, Set 4, Story C

If you take care of your shoes, they will last a long time. If they get wet, dry them slowly with low heat. Keep mud and dirt brushed off. Wax your shoes often. The shoe wax will protect the leather and make your shoes look nice. Use a soft rag to put the wax on your shoes, and a soft brush to make them shine. With care, your shoes will last for years.

1. What can you do to make your shoes look nice?

   A. You can buy new shoes anytime.

   B. You can wax and brush your shoes often.

   C. You can get your shoes wet.

2. What is the topic for this story?

   A. shoe care

   B. clothing tips

   C. wax

   D. there is no topic

3. What is the best main idea?

   A. Wet shoes should be dried slowly.

   B. Soft cloths and brushes are best.

   C. Shoes will last a long time if cared for.

4. If your shoes get wet, you should _____.

   A. dry them slowly

   B. use a soft rag

   C. dry them quickly

Grade 3, Set 4, Story D

Billy Barnes looked out of his bedroom window at the gray sky. The rain was pouring down. It soaked the trees with their new green leaves. Out on the baseball field, mud puddles grew bigger and bigger. It was a wonderful spring rain but Billy didn't think so.

Billy threw his ball and mitt into a corner. "Why did it have to rain today?"

He slammed the door to his room and kicked his bed. The big game had been called off because of the rain. Next month, his team would be out there playing, but he wouldn't be. His family was moving to Ohio next week, so he could not stay to play. It would be such an important game, too. How could his team win if he, the star pitcher, wasn't going to be there?

1. How does Billy Barnes feel? A. cheerful B. upset C. sick D. hopeful	3. What season of the year is it? A. fall B. summer C. winter D. spring
2. Why does Billy feel this way? A. Because he doesn't want to play baseball. B. Because the baseball game was called off.	4. Why is Billy important for the team? A. He is a good runner. B. He is the best pitcher. C. He is the best catcher. D. He is the best batter.

Grade 5, Set 1, Story A

Victor loved to go ice-skating at the Starlight Rink. Some skaters whirled around the edge of the ice, never seeming to stop. Others paused at benches to tighten the laces on their skates. Victor liked coming to the arena at night. He could look up and see the stars twinkling in the black sky. Sometimes he could see the blinking lights of a jet as it passed overhead. Soft music played through loudspeakers, and pink and blue spotlights shone on the ice.

Grade 5, Set 1, Story B

Sarah woke up at 7 o'clock on Monday morning. She was about to get out of bed when she remembered that she didn't have to get up early. Today she was going to the dentist to have her teeth cleaned. Sarah snuggled deeper under the covers.

At 8 o'clock, Sarah's mother came into her room and gave her a big glass of orange juice. While Sarah was gulping down the juice, her mother went over their morning plans.

"After breakfast, we'll drive to the dentist for your check-up. You should be through by 10 o'clock. Then we'll go to Pearson's to buy some tennis shoes. We'll come back home for an early lunch. You'll have plenty of time to get to school for your afternoon classes. How does that sound?"

"Great," said Sarah as she threw back the blankets. "Let's get going."

1. When did Sarah get out of bed? A. as soon as she woke up B. before she drank her juice C. after her mother went over their plans	3. What were Sarah and her mother going to do first? A. drive to school B. go to the dentist C. eat an early lunch
2. Why did Sarah snuggle under the covers? A. She didn't want to go to school. B. She was waiting for breakfast in bed. C. She remembered she was going to the dentist.	4. Why did Sarah's mother plan an early lunch for them? A. She knew they would be hungry after shopping. B. She didn't want Sarah to miss her afternoon classes. C. They had not had time to eat breakfast that morning.

Grade 5, Set 1, Story C

Postage stamps have been in use for a little over a hundred years. Until stamps came into use, a mark or a seal was put on a letter by the sender. The person who received the letter had to pay for it when it arrived. In 1840 England reformed the postal payment system by making a stamp called a "Penny Black." After that a letter could be sent anywhere in England for the price of one penny. Other countries followed England's example and began to issue stamps. The United States printed its first stamp in 1847. By 1860 almost every country had decided to use stamps as the way to pay for postage.

1. What is the main topic of the article? A. How Postage Stamps Came Into Use B. Stamps of England C. Early Ways of Sending Letters	3. Where was the "Penny Black" used? A. The United States B. England C. almost every country
2. Who paid for a letter before stamps were used? A. the person who sent a letter B. the person who received a letter C. the person who delivered a letter	4. What was put on a letter before stamps were used? A. a mark or seal B. a sticker C. a Penny Black

Grade 5, Set 1, Story D

There are many different kinds of bees in the world. Scientists usually divide them into two main groups: social bees and solitary bees. Social bees live in groups called colonies. Each social bee works with the others to help build the nest for the colony.

Most bees are solitary bees. They live and work alone. Sometimes many solitary bees live in one area and build their nests close together. Each female bee does her own work. She builds a nest with many cells where she stores pollen from flowers. Then she lays an egg in each cell, seals up the nest, and flies away. After the eggs hatch, the growing bees eat the pollen. The new bee eats its way out of the cell after it is grown.

For example, mason bees are solitary bees. One kind of mason bee builds a nest on a wall or stone. The female bee gathers clay in her mouth and forms cells that stick to the stone. After she fills the cells with food and eggs, she covers all the cells with more clay. The hard clay protects the eggs until they are ready to hatch.

1. Most bees are _____. A. social bees B. solitary bees C. mason bees	3. Where do mason bees build their nests? A. on a wall or rock B. on clay ground C. in a large colony
2. Where do mason bees work? A. in small groups B. in large colonies C. alone	4. What does the female mason bee do first? A. seals the nest with clay B. stores pollen in the nest C. lays an egg in each cell

Grade 5, Set 2, Story A

Homing pigeons are very special birds. They are trained to fly back to their home coop after being taken a long way away and let go. Sometimes these pigeons, often called homers, are used to carry messages.

Homers have a remarkable sense for flying back to their coop, even from places where they have never been before. These birds must know the right directi to take because they can fly home from more than 100 miles away in less than two days. Some people thin that homers are guided by the sun because the pigeo often lose their way when the weather is cloudy or foggy. Scientists think that homing pigeons may somehow use the earth's magnetic fields to tell where they are.

Grade 5, Set 2, Story B

Long ago Celtic peoples celebrated the season of cold and darkness. They marked the beginning of winter by lighting bonfires, wearing special costumes, and telling ghost stories. Today, children practice some of these customs at the end of October on Halloween.

Some people think they can tell when the end of winter will come by watching a ground hog. They say that on February 2 a ground hog will come out of his hole to look for his shadow. If he sees his shadow, he will go back to sleep until winter is over. If the ground hog does not see his shadow, he will begin his spring activities and bring an end to winter.

1. What is the main topic of this story? A. Celtic Holidays B. Customs about the Beginning and End of Winter C. The Beginning of Spring	3. Some people believe that the winter is almost over when A. it is February 2. B. the ground hog wakes up. C. the ground hog can't find his shadow.
2. When did Celtic people wear costumes and tell stories? A. at the beginning of winter B. on Halloween C. at the beginning of spring	4. How are children today the same as Celtic people of long ago? A. They both have customs at the beginning of winter. B. They both play trick-or-treat on Halloween. C. They look for the ground hog in February.

Grade 5, Set 2, Story C

Captain Garcia checked the rows of buttons and switches in front of her. Through the window, she could see the surface below. "There's our landing pad ahead," she calmly announced to the crew. She told the crew to prepare to land while she pulled one button and switch after another with a steady hand. In a few minutes the ship landed with hardly a bump.

With a smile, Captain Garcia flipped another switch and began to speak. "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Flight 302 from New York has just landed. Please put on your space helmets. We hope you have a pleasant stay at Moon City Number 3."

1. Where does this story take place? A. on a spaceship B. on the ocean C. in New York	3. Where have they landed? A. in New York B. on the moon C. on Mars
2. How does Captain Garcia feel? A. nervous B. calm C. angry	4. Who was Captain Garcia talking to? A. people in New York B. people in Moon City Number 3 C. passengers and crew

Grade 5, Set 2, Story D

Mathew Brady was one of America's first, well-known photographers. He was born in Warren County, New York, around the year 1823. In 1844, he opened his own studio in New York City. During the next 15 years, the studio was very successful. Brady took thousands of portraits of Americans, and his pictures won many awards.

In 1860, at the start of the Civil War, Brady decided to record scenes of wartime America. He used much of his fortune to train a team of photographers. Then Brady and his assistants traveled through the northern and southern states. They fearlessly recorded the events of the terrible war with their cameras. These photos were important because they accurately showed individual soldiers, the action on the battlegrounds, and life in the army camps. Until this time, events of this type had been shown only in drawings and paintings. Brady's photographs made the war seem real to the American public.

During the war, Brady and his team took over 3500 photographs. In 1870, the government bought 2000 of the photographs. Those that were left were sold to private collectors to pay off Brady's debts. By the end of his life, Brady had spent most of his money, and he suffered from poverty and ill health. He died in New York City in January, 1896.

1. When did Brady's pictures become popular? A. after the government bought some of the photographs B. during the years of the Civil War C. from the time that Brady opened his studio	3. Why was Brady's record of the Civil War important? A. No one had ever photographed a war before. B. Brady and his assistants were able to practice taking pictures. C. The pictures helped Brady pay off his debts.
2. Where did Brady's team of photographers take their pictures? A. in Brady's New York studio B. in Warren County, New York C. in army camps and battlegrounds	4. Why did Brady and his assistants travel through the northern and southern States? A. They trained a team of photographers. B. They recorded the events of the war. C. They opened new studios.

Grade 5, Set 3, Story A

Don was home alone. He was sitting in an armchair and reading a book. He listened to the rain outside. He liked the soft rhythm of the drops as they splashed gently on the window panes. When Don finished the first chapter of his book, he went on to the next. Before long he heard his parents come in the front door. He was surprised at how quickly the evening had passed.

Grade 5, Set 3, Story B

An almanac is a book that is published once a year. It has many different kinds of information in it. Long ago an almanac included the times that the sun, moon, and stars would rise and set, and a calendar of the months. People thought this information was useful to farmers and sailors. Today an almanac still has a calendar, but it also tells facts about the weather, government, and industry.

1. Which sentence states the main idea?

   A. An almanac used to have information that was used by farmers and sailors.

   B. An almanac is a book that contains many different kinds of information.

   C. An almanac today has information that can be used by people in government and industry

2. What kind of information was given in an almanac long ago?

   A. when it would rain

   B. when to plant crops

   C. when the sun would set

3. How often is an almanac published?

   A. once a year

   B. every month

   C. twice a year

4. When did almanacs have a calendar?

   A. long ago

   B. today

   C. both today and long ago

Grade 5, Set 3, Story C

Olivia was an airplane pilot. She enjoyed flying and she thought it would be fun to do all sorts of tricks with her plane. She decided to learn how to do stunts.

Olivia signed up for a special flying class. Every week she learned how to fly her plane in a new way. She would practice each trick over and over until she could do it perfectly. One trick she frequently practiced was flying in big loops.

After Olivia completed her special class, a movie company asked her to be a pilot for them. In her first movie, Olivia played the part of Harriet Quimby, one of the first women to fly a plane. She wore a purple outfit and a long, white scarf. When she got in the plane, she put on her goggles. Then she flew into the air with her scarf trailing behind her.

1. What did Olivia do first? A. she learned how to do stunts B. she was in a movie C. she became an airplane pilot	3. What did Olivia think about flying? A. she enjoyed it B. she wanted to be in the movies instead C. she was afraid of flying
2. What did she want to do next? A. learn how to do tricks B. become an actress C. become a pilot	4. When Olivia wore a white scarf, what was she doing? A. flying in big loops B. playing a part in a movie C. going to flying class

Grade 5, Set 3, Story D

A mask is a covering that hides or protects the face. The first masks were probably animal heads used to disguise hunters. Later on, people made elaborate masks which they wore for different reasons.

Ceremonial masks were worn by dancers at festivals. The masked dancers represented different gods. Many early peoples thought that the gods were really present during these festival dances.

Some Indian tribes used ceremonial masks for different purposes. The Iroquois Indians wore wooden masks to help heal the sick. Certain Indian tribes on the Pacific Coast made masks with moving parts. The masks, which represented animals or birds, could be moved to show the wearer's face. These Indians believed that the dancers could change into animals and back again.

Theatrical masks were used in dramatic plays. Ancient Greek actors wore this kind of mask. Greek theaters were so large that the people watching a play couldn't see the actors' faces very well. So the actors wore big masks that showed joy, love, anger, and other feelings. This way the audience knew what was happening in the play.

1. What were the first masks probably used for? A. to show the feelings of dancers B. to disguise hunters C. to represent gods	3. Where were ceremonial masks worn? A. at festivals B. in large theaters C. in dramatic plays
2. Why couldn't people see the actors' faces in Greek theaters? A. The actors were wearing masks. B. The actors were too far away. C. The masks did not have moving parts.	4. Which masks showed the feelings of different characters? A. ceremonial masks B. theatrical masks C. the first masks

Grade 5, Set 4, Story A

Robert Fulton was a jeweler, a painter, and a gunsmith from Pennsylvania. He is best known for his work on paddlewheel steamboats. He invented several kinds of machines also. One was designed to saw through marble and another could twist hemp into rope. During the War of 1812, Fulton invented a floating fort to protect New York Harbor.

Thomas Alva Edison is well known as the inventor of the electric light bulb, but he did many other things too. Edison believed in working on useful ideas. He invented the phonograph, some parts that were used in the telephone, and the first movie projector in his New Jersey laboratory. During World War I, Edison helped the Navy solve some of its scientific problems.

Grade 5, Set 4, Story B

The old woman settled comfortably in her chair and rocked to the soothing music being broadcast on the "Luncheon Radio Hour." Her hands lay peacefully in her lap, and she hummed to the music when her favorite tunes were played. The bright October sun filtered through the curtains and cast a lacy pattern on the braided rug. The old woman stirred, and found her glasses on a nearby table. She adjusted them on her nose, and then took up the afternoon paper. After five minutes it slipped from her hands and she dozed in the warm sun. Outside her apartment the pigeons perched on the narrow window ledge, and the constant sound of busy traffic drifted up to the fifth floor.

1. How does the old woman feel? A. lonely B. uncomfortable C. content	3. What is the weather like outside? A. rainy B. sunny C. cold
2. What part of the day is it? A. morning B. afternoon C. evening	4. Where is this story taking place? A. in a city B. on a farm C. in a hospital

Grade 5, Set 4, Story C

Franco had been drifting for six hours. Several times he thought he had heard the whine of an airplane. He had searched the horizon each time, but he never saw an airplane. The rosy fingers of the setting sun stretched across the water and shimmered on the waves that lapped against his life raft. Soon it would be dark. Franco was glad that the breezes were now cool because his skin had been burned in the hot sun. He hoped that he would be rescued soon. His food would last for several days, but there was nothing on the raft to protect him from the sun. "By now someone must know that my ship went down," Franco thought.

1. Where is Franco? A. on a ship B. in an airplane C. on a life raft	3. How does Franco feel? A. relaxed B. worried C. bored
2. What part of the day is it? A. morning B. afternoon C. evening	4. What is Franco's worst problem? A. he doesn't have enough food B. it is getting dark and cold C. he doesn't have shelter from the sun

Grade 5, Set 4, Story D

Asiatic black bears live in the forests of eastern and southern Asia. The adult bears weigh about 250 pounds. Asiatic black bears are black with white hairs on the chin and a white moon-shaped mark on the chest. Sometimes they are called moon bears.

Asiatic black bears sleep for short periods in the winter. They sleep on beds of twigs in the snow and like to sun themselves on warm days. In the summer they build nestlike beds of sticks in the trees.

Sun bears are the smallest kind of bears. They weigh from 60 to 100 pounds when they are fully grown. Most sun bears have a black coat and an orange or gray nose. The bear gets its name from the yellow or white marks on its chest. People in early times thought that the marks showed the rising sun.

Sun bears hunt only at night and spend the day sleeping and sunbathing in trees. They make their nestlike beds by breaking or bending the branches in the trees. Sun bears are found in the Asian forests of Borneo, Burma, Indochina, Malaysia, Sumatra, and Thailand.

1. Which bears are found in Asian forests? A. Asiatic black bears B. sun bears C. both kinds of bears	3. Which sentence is true about sun bears? A. They go hunting at sunrise. B. They are small. C. They cannot climb trees.
2. Which bears like to sunbathe? A. Asiatic black bears B. sun bears C. both kinds of bears	4. Why are Asiatic black bears sometimes called moon bears? A. They have a white patch. B. They hunt only at night. C. They sleep in the winter.